THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The Kisan Call Centres (KCCs) are located at 14 locations, including one at Jaipur in Rajasthan. The entire country is covered from these 14 locations. Separate KCC seats are provided for different States at each of these locations.

(c) Over 6 lakh calls were received at KCCs from throughout the country during 2006-07, of which about 67,900 calls were from Rajasthan. The KCCs provide a facility to farmers to seek farm related information at their initiative through toll free telephone lines.

Food security

2743. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that food security in the country is under serious threat and the long terms plans to address the malaise are not in place as the problem itself is not acknowledged;

(b) whether it is a fact that last year we imported 5.5 million tonnes of wheat after a six year hiatus and this supply side shortage may result in India becoming net importer of food products again; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to improve the acreage under the agriculture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) There is no serious threat to food security in the country. There is a stock of 190.72 lakh tonnes of foodgrains as on 1st April, 2007 against the buffer norms of 162.00 lakh tonnes of foodgrains. The long term plan to ensure food security in the country includes allocation of foodgrains at subsidized rates for the Above Poverty Line (APL), Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) categories under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and for several welfare schemes for different section of societies like, Annapoorna Scheme, Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojana, Wheat Based Nutrition Programme, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Village Gramins Banks Scheme, Emergency Feeding Programme, Scheme for supply of foodgrains for hostels and welfare institutions etc., which are being implemented by various Ministries

and Departments *viz.* Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Human Resource Development etc.

It is a fact that 5.5 million tonnes of wheat was contracted for import for the Central Pool Stocks through the State Trading Corporation during the year 2006, out of which 5.38 million tonnes have already arrived as on 19/04/2007.

(c) As informed by Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, to increase the production of food related crops through increased area or productivity or both, following Centrally Sponsored Schemes are under implementation in various States of the country:

(A) Crop Oriented Developmental Schemes:

(i) Integrated Cereals Development Programmes in Rice/Wheat/ Coarse Cereals Based Cropping Systems Areas (ICDP-Rice/ Wheat/Coarse Cerals) under which assistance is provided for transfer of technology through demonstration and farmers' training, integrated pest management, farm implements, installation of sprinkler irrigation system, varietal replacement and supply of certified seeds etc.

(ii) Integrated Schemes of Oil seeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM) under which assistance is provided for production of breeder/foundation/certified seeds, distribution of certified seeds and seeds minikits, farm implements, sprinkler/drip irrigation system, integrated pest management and transfer of technology through demonstration and farmers' training.

(iii) Sustainable Development of Sugarcane Based Cropping System (SUBACS) under which assistance is provided for transfer of improved technology through field demonstrations and farmers' training, farm implements, seed production and pest control measures etc.

(iv) National Horticulture Mission and Horticulture Technology Mission for North-Eastern and Himalayan States: Under these two schemes assistance is given for the area expansion under horticulture crops along with technical guidance for quality seed production to the growers.

(B) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPRA):

The programme aims at the development of land resources making it more productive including improvement of culturable wasteland area through soil and water conservation programmes. The programme specially focuses on (i) conservation, development and sustainable management of natural resources including various uses; (ii) enhancement of agricultural production and productivity in a sustainable manner; (iii) restoration of ecological balance in the degraded and fragile rainfed eco-systems by greening these areas through appropriate mix of trees, shrubs and grasses; and (iv) reduction in regional disparity between irrigated and rainfed areas, etc.

Procurement by private sectors

2744. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have finally decided to allow private sectors' participation in the procurement, marketing and selling of farm produce in the States; and

(b) if so, the details thereof including the names of the States which have agreed to amend their Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Acts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA) : (a) and (b) The Central Government has advised the State Governments by circulating a Model Agricultural Produce Marketing (Development and Regulation) Act in 2003 to make amendments in their respective Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Acts to allow direct marketing, contract farming and to promote setting up of competitive markets in private and cooperative sector. The development of contract farming, direct marketing and alternative competitive market in private and cooperative sector would provide freedom to farmers to sell their produce in such market, which will ensure them better prices/services. Since agriculture marketing is a State subject, it is for the State Governments to amend the APMC Acts as suited to them.